


# **ARCHITECTURE: A THEATRICALS EXPERIENCE**

**A comparative study of "Theatre Architecture" and "Drama" as a  
means of expression.**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE  
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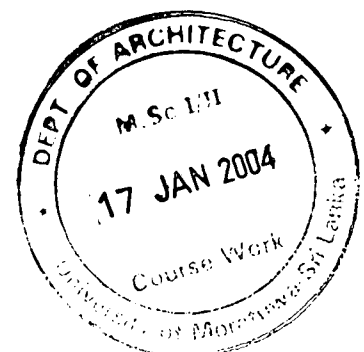
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## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously include in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

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FORWARD TO,

***MY LOVING 'AMMA' & 'APPACHCHI'.***

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January. 2004



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## **AN ABSTRACT**

Architecture is an art of ordering space, in which space is manipulated to convey meaning. Architectural space is a combination of space and form to fulfil and accommodate varying activities of man. Space thus created is a container of expression and meaning and is to be seen; experienced and lived in

The actual experience of architectural space by an observer within that space has many similarities to the viewer's perceptions of a chosen sequence within a drama. In the drama the space is conceived by the sequence, which has the chain of events. Any dramatic sequence is obtained by spatial drama. Dramatic movements are the assemblage of numerous composition and these are glued together from different parts to make the scene. This sequence maker's viewer to gasp the spatial progression, the climax and the smooth progression. The actual spatial dimensions of space and volume are expressed in a sequence of drama.

Architecture encloses spaces not for spaces themselves as a container, but for the life that goes within it. Drama in this equal sense is cantered upon the living experience and is created by sequences in grouping architectural spaces

The mutual relations of stage drama as an art form and theatre architecture is explored in various aspect such as line, form, shape, rhythm, movement, orchestration etc.

*"Maname"* and *"Sinhabahu"* and architectural products of 'Srathchandra Open Air theatre' -University of Peradeniya and 'John De Silva theatre' Colombo 07 are taken as example or to identify the experience they generate as well as meaning embodied.



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## INTRODUCTION



## ARCHITECTURE: A THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Observation**

Most people judge architecture by external appearance, just as books on the subject usually express what others say. It is important that architecture is understood from different points of view. There are many not only laymen, who claims not to know what architecture is. The real problem is not knowing it, but thinking that one knows it and doing so from a very restricted and narrow point of view. Such narrow perceptions can be dangerous and simplistic.

Architecture is the closest art form the human being. No other art is intimately connected with mans daily life. Architecture is an unavoidable art. It is an art and a personal, enjoyable necessary experience, and precisely its limits are by no means well defined. On the whole, art should not be explained, it must be experienced.

Modern man lives in a machine age and does not have time to relax or appreciate his living environment. Machines have become autonomous and men had become servile and mechanical; de-humanized and disconnected from their historic values and purposes. It seems that one whole part of man's life, springing from his innermost nature, his deepest desires and impulses, his ability enjoy and bestow love, to give life to his fellow men and receive form them has been suppressed. This part of mans nature has become progressively empty and meaningless. This death of human personality can be seen in music, poetry and painting and even in architecture.

### **Need for the study**

In many instances what is produced today in the name of architecture is merely commodity catering only to man's quantitative requirements, and it has seized to become an art. The value of arts lacks in every area of design, and there seems to be the danger of lack of communication in architecture.

Buildings to be works of architecture, then the beholder must feel happiness and enjoy this world. Because architecture is the permanent setting of a culture, and its people, It must convey meaning to the user and spectator and enable him, with a fuller response on his own to participate and



experience it. But it has become a technique rather than an art in contemporary architecture. Architecture has spirit that most of the buildings does not.

Architecture must rise to the level of art to achieve its qualitative aspects. Because art is the vehicle for transmitting the values and meanings that spring from the very depth of the self. The experience of a work of art is initiated with an emotional attachment and bound for communication. The art of 'stage drama' is expressed live visually. It is rich with exploring and representing the nature of human truth and interpretation of nature. Its relation to the existing human world is simply so much more evident that distinguishes it from other arts. Therefore 'stage drama' is very important to 'theatre architecture' in this particular aspect. As a result drama is being picked as a parallel to theatre architecture in this particular study. It is evident that there is possibility of existence of several types of relationships between stage drama and theatre architecture. Architecture is described in drama and it is produced in an architectural setting with highly expressive meaning.

### **Intention of the study**



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Intention of the study is therefore to formulate a perception of architecture and its creativity through knowledge of another parallel. The major parallel to architecture is art, which is the common pool where poetry, sculpture, music, painting, cinema and drama belong.

In this regard an attempt is made to find out various levels where stage drama and theatre architecture become as parallel. From the outset both are visual arts, which communicate, but drama is a medium of mass communication where large audience seems to enjoy entertainment that is familiar in drama and easy and comforting to 'read' or perceive. Regarding this, where architecture became utilitarian and unreadable, only a commodity not an art.

Stage drama fills space with visual representation of the physical characteristics of people, places and things, while it handles event or actions in time. The study will be with reference to those space-time relationships, visual perception of 'monuments' which drawing attention, and the expressive qualities of composition.



The study is therefore to discover in detail the meaning communicated by stage drama by given examples and similarities of which should have been embodied in theatre architecture. The ultimate goal is to nourish the architectural field.

## Limitations

The study is a particular line to understand and research in architecture. As this is a vast field of study which has several directions of creation, commodity that has economical and social value, and not limited to particular area or country but both fields are distributed throughout the world. Therefore related examples are limited to local and some selected foreign examples. It deals with the expressive qualities in the field of stage drama and work of theatre architecture and the corresponding quality transformation of that place in man.

## Method of the study

At the outset, architecture will be defined as a work of art, the ultimate purpose to bring about its qualitative aspects.



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Examining theatrical space and dramatic movements and the related elements to identify their principles, ways of expression and human perceptions will be carried out. First hand information's and literary data will be comparatively analysed and an attempt to establish parallelism – in its enhancement & moment of 'enlightenment'

The first chapter will make a detailed study on 'The total architecture' experience; the purpose, process, generating factors and communication, the meaning embodied. At the outset, architecture will be defined as a work of art. The second chapter deals with theatre as the 'Total theatrical experience' the three major fields of expression, communication and meaning. Sociality, functionality and 3-D form. The third chapter deals with parallelism, the drama and theatre architecture. In-depth study of the language, form, space, creativity, imagination and spatial drama as well as visual perception and space time relationship.

